Ploughshares

REPORT

A report on the 2022 Project Ploughshares workshop series

Canada and the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons

MARCH 2023

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We are grateful for the opportunity and the experience.

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INTRODUCTION

Project Ploughshares organized and hosted a series of virtual interactive workshops throughout 2022 with the goal of providing a knowledge-base to enable grassroots support for furthering Canada's disarmament agenda, in particular as it relates to its engagement with the historic Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW or "Nuclear Ban Treaty").

The adoption (July 2017) and subsequent entry into force (January 2021) of the TPNW has come to embody the frustration of the majority of the world's countries with policies and actions that perpetuate nuclear weapons possession, and the lack of demonstrable progress toward nuclear abolition.

The ongoing maintenance and stockpiling of nuclear weapons constitutes a clear and present threat to global security, with nearly 13,000 nuclear weapons still in existence. The devastating humanitarian and environmental consequences of the possible accidental launch or intentional use of a single warhead are clear. However, progress to eliminate nuclear weapons at the international level has been slow.

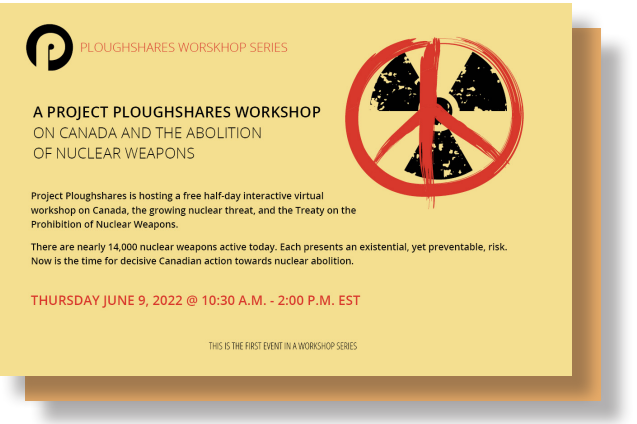
Although Canada's official position is that it supports the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons, it continues to endorse the nuclear deterrence doctrine of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), even as the multilateral policy landscape on which nuclear disarmament negotiations occur is being reshaped. Like most NATO members, Canada boycotted multilateral negotiations on the TPNW and did not attend the first TPNW meeting of states parties held in June 2022.

The first workshop in this series provided information about the state of affairs in the global nuclear disarmament regime, as well as the process leading to the negotiation and adoption of the TPNW and expectations ahead of the first meeting of states parties. The remaining workshops took stock of what transpired at the meeting of states parties and considered actions that the Canadian government could take to advance nuclear disarmament.

The workshops were segmented into thematic modules with recognized experts in the field as facilitators. They were designed to spark conversation and advance knowledge of the issue of nuclear disarmament at the grassroots level. The target audience was youth and faith-based constituencies as well as the wider general public. Participants were informed about the context and implications of the TPNW, as well as the role that Canada must play multilaterally to advance the goal of a world free from the scourge of nuclear weapons. The events were attended by a wide range of individuals from across Canada and abroad, offering diverse perspectives.

All workshops were recorded and are available for viewing.

WORKSHOP 1



Workshop I, with four modules, was conducted on June 9.

Module 1: Nuclear disarmament 101

The first module was facilitated by Ploughshares Executive Director Cesar Jaramillo. He began by asking workshop participants how worried they were about nuclear weapons; 80% said that they were "very worried" while 20% were "somewhat worried." This sense of anxiety characterized the workshop.

Participants learned that nuclear weapons are the most devastating instrument of mass destruction ever conceived. Their use on August 6 and 9, 1945 on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki resulted in more than 150,000 immediate deaths. As Cesar remarked, a nuclear weapon "is a man-made threat that can wholly alter the course of civilization."

Other data about nuclear weapons was also provided:

- Number of nuclear weapons at the height of the Cold War: > 60,000
- Number of nuclear weapons now: ~ 13,000
- Number of countries with nuclear weapons: 9
- Percentage of nuclear weapons held by Russia and the United States (U.S.): 95%

Although precise figures are hard to nail down because of the lack of transparency in reporting by individual states, the general estimations of nuclear weapons provided by third parties are widely accepted.

In a concerning trend, nuclear-armed states seem to be becoming less transparent. For instance, the United Kingdom (UK) announced in 2021 that it would no longer publicly share information on its stockpile numbers. Bucking this trend, the Biden Administration in the United States recently restored an Obama-era practice of stating U.S. stockpile numbers, which had been halted by the Trump administration.

Cesar listed a number of factors that are relevant when analyzing the significance of the process of disarmament for individual countries:

- Number of available warheads

- Types of delivery systems
- The country's command-and-control structure
- The state of industrial production
- Current domestic politics
- Existing multilateral efforts.

And he pointed out that nuclear weapons are not all the same. Tactical nuclear weapons have a shorter range and smaller yields than bigger, more destructive strategic nuclear weapons. The delivery vehicle or system also affects capability. Approximately 2,000 weapons are reportedly ready for use, on hair-trigger alert, while others are in storage.

The narrative then shifted to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), an international treaty that was designed to achieve nuclear disarmament and entered into force in 1970. While the NPT is known as the cornerstone of global nuclear disarmament efforts, its credibility has diminished over time. The NPT had three aims: to ensure that states without nuclear weapons did not procure them, that states with nuclear weapons would disarm (Article 6), and that all states would be able to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. While there has been some success in achieving the first goal, total failure marks the second.

Article 6 obligates NPT States Parties to "pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control." Article 6 has been criticized for being vague as well as for its poor implementation by States Parties. In 1996, the International Court of Justice determined that to "pursue negotiations in good faith" meant that states had an obligation to take positive steps to disarm.

Other critical issues that limit the success of the NPT include:

- Sharing of nuclear weapons

NATO, which has both nuclear-armed and non-nuclear-armed states as members, allows its non-nuclear-armed members to host the nuclear weapons of nuclear-armed members. In this way some of the political and operational benefits and risks associated with the nuclear deterrence mission are shared.

- Modernization

Nuclear-armed states have engaged in modernization programs to improve nuclear warheads, weapons facilities, and delivery systems, intending to increase defence and deterrence capabilities.

- The position adopted by nuclear-dependent states

Some states that are officially non-nuclear-weapon states subscribe to policies and treaties that align them with nuclear-armed allies.

- Treaty outliers

India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea are not party to the NPT but constitute 44% of nuclear-armed states. Iran has never possessed nuclear weapons. The 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the Iran Nuclear Deal, assured the world that Iran would not pursue nuclear weapons. Then, in 2018, the United States withdrew from the deal. Current indicators show that Iran has since stopped complying with the terms of the deal and may inch closer to a nuclear weapons capability. Despite these and other challenges, the non-proliferation pillar of the NPT is said to have held up well.

The module closed with a discussion of the Doomsday Clock, which was set at 100 seconds to midnight in 2022, the closest that we have ever been, because of the likelihood of nuclear war. There is a reason that the very first UN resolution was on the abolition of nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons have been a looming threat to humanity since their inception, but problems with implementing their elimination persist.

Some NPT States Parties, including the United States, continue to act against the abolition of nuclear weapons despite being vocal proponents for it. During the time when negotiations on the 2017 Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons were under way, the United States sent a memo to all NATO member states that asked them to boycott the TPNW. (Soon after this workshop, the first meeting of States Parties to the TPNW was held; NATO states Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway attended as observers.)

While the number of nuclear weapons has decreased, the number of weapons that remain on alert, coupled with fraught global geopolitical tensions, produce heightened nuclear risks comparable to those of the Cold War. Until nuclear weapons are abolished, the Doomsday Clock will likely continue to inch closer to midnight.

Module 2: NATO, collective security, and nuclear deterrence

The second module was facilitated by Matt Korda, a Senior Research Associate and Project Manager for the Nuclear Information Project at the Federation of American Scientists and an associate researcher in the Weapons of Mass Destruction Programme at the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

Matt began with an overview of NATO. NATO was established in 1949 as a nuclear alliance; it employed tactical nuclear weapons to defend Europe from the Soviet Union's superior conventional forces. The United States wanted to discourage European countries from getting their own weapons, and so, through NATO, the United States allowed its weapons to be hosted on European territory.

While the United States, France, and the United Kingdom are NATO's three nuclear powers, only the United States has shared its nuclear weapons with other members of NATO. Canada hosted U.S. nuclear weapons from 1950-1984, but stopped because the weapons were unpopular with the Canadian public. During the Cold War, the United States stored nuclear weapons in eight states. Today Belgium, Germany, Turkey, the Netherlands, and Italy still host U.S. nuclear weapons.

Between 1952 and 1968, the United States and nuclear-hosting states signed between 70 and 80 individual nuclear agreements. The agreements specified that the nuclear weapons were under the direct control of the United States and were supervised by a custodial

detachment of the U.S. Air Force. Permission of the U.S. President was needed to allow aircraft of the host state to deliver any of these weapons at the onset of a conflict. Non-nuclear-holding states can also take part in the nuclear-sharing mission through Support of Nuclear Operations with Conventional Air Tactics (SNOWCAT), in which they can provide close air support to the aircraft that carry the nuclear weapons.

Critics of the nuclear-sharing mission have pointed out that the existence of U.S. nuclear weapons in some NATO states did not prevent the Russian invasion. However, as Matt noted, Ukraine is not a member of NATO. And it is possible that the presence of NATO and U.S. nuclear weapons has prevented the war from escalating beyond Ukraine.

When the NPT came into effect, there were five states with nuclear weapons; today there are nine. Still, there are some positive signs for those opposed to nuclear weapons and especially the hosting of U.S. weapons.

According to Matt, public opinion on hosting U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe is not positive. In January 2022, a motion in the Belgian parliament to have U.S. nuclear weapons removed from Belgian soil was only narrowly defeated. Opposition to nuclear-sharing is being voiced; questions are being asked about whether these practices comply with the non-transfer provisions in the NPT. Critics say that there simply isn't a significant need for U.S. weapons in Europe.

And alarms are being raised about weapon security. During the attempted 2016 coup d'état in Türkiye, government forces cut the power to U.S. Air Force bases, effectively holding the weapons hostage. Further to this, investigative journalism outlet Bellingcat revealed that U.S. Air Force officers in Europe had been using public flashcard websites to study for their nuclear weapons maintenance exams.

Even with all these security problems, some nuclear-armed states, including the United States, are upgrading their nuclear weapons. People in nuclear-armed states in Europe, especially France, tend to see their own nuclear weapons as an instrument of deterrence. Both France and the United Kingdom can be seen to use their nuclear-armed status as a way to maintain positions of global power.

Module 3: Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)

This module covered the inception and details of the TPNW. It was moderated by Erin Hunt, Program Manager at Mines Action Canada, who has been involved in humanitarian disarmament since 2006.

As Erin explained, the humanitarian approach to disarmament was first established in the 1990s, with Canada playing a major role. With this approach, policy and law on conventional weapons and disarmament are based on the effects of weapons on people. Even though nuclear weapons were used in 1945, the first international meeting to discuss the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons was not held until 2013.

Work on the TPNW began after the culmination of the Review Conference (RevCon) of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 2010. For the first time, the NPT RevCon's final document explicitly recognized the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. In a series of meetings, member states and stakeholders were brought together

The principle of proportionality governs the use of force. If an actor expects civilian casualties or damage to civilian infrastructure from its use of force, then the damage must be proportional to the military advantage gained by the actor. If the level of civilian harm is thought to be greater than the military advantage, then the actor cannot proceed.

to explore the results of a world in which nuclear weapons were used. The first was held in 2013, with two more in 2014; attendees concluded that there was no way to rebuild after the use of nuclear weapons, especially in urban areas. They also determined that there was a gap in the international legal framework governing the use of nuclear weapons.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) convened an open-ended working group on this topic. Negotiations followed in 2017. However, Canada and its allies voted against this process and did not participate in negotiations.

Nuclear weapons were said to violate two principles of international humanitarian law (IHL) because of the indiscriminate destruction they cause. These principles are:

1. Proportionality: The principle of proportionality governs the use of force. If an actor expects civilian casualties or damage to civilian infrastructure from its use of force, then the damage must be proportional to the military advantage gained by the actor. If the level of civilian harm is thought to be greater than the military advantage, then the actor cannot proceed.
2. Distinction: The principle of distinction states that an actor must be able to distinguish between civilians and combatants. In conflict, actors may only target combatants to fulfil their military objectives.

All types of nuclear weapon violate these principles. This is true, for example, of tactical nuclear weapons, which are typically understood to possess "low-yield" warheads. Because they still result in long-term indiscriminate destruction, their use violates both principles.

At the UNGA in 2015, most member states voted to establish a working group that was intended to produce recommendations that would lead to the negotiation of a treaty to

The principle of distinction states that an actor must be able to distinguish between civilians and combatants. In conflict, actors may only target combatants to fulfil their military objectives.

prohibit the use of nuclear weapons. The result of this process was the TPNW. It formally opened for signatures in September 2017, gained the required 50 states parties in October 2020, and entered into force three months later, in January 2021.

The TPNW consists of 20 articles:

- Article 1: Prohibited Acts
- Articles 2-5: Implementing Prohibitions – safeguards and legislation
- Articles 6-7: Positive Obligations – victim and environmental remediation
- Article 8: Meeting of States Parties
- Articles 9-20: Administration.

Some critics argue that the TPNW weakens the NPT; in fact, the TPNW is based on language in Article 6 of the NPT. The first meeting of States Parties, set to take place soon after this workshop, was expected to bring 100 governments to the table to develop processes and procedures to assist victims and achieve treaty universalization.

While Erin commended the TPNW for the articles on positive obligations, she noted that such obligations are found elsewhere in the field of disarmament. She highlighted the focus on prohibition because it put nuclear-armed states into immediate non-compliance. Acceding to the TPNW obliges States Parties to amend national legislation; such action makes citizens aware of the current role of nuclear weapons.

Civil society also plays a big role in bringing and keeping nuclear weapons in the public consciousness. The Canadian public wants nuclear weapons banned; a 2021 poll showed that most Canadians wanted Ottawa to sign the TPNW. Through the Cities Appeal, munici-

pal governments including Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, and Ottawa have called for the federal government to sign the TPNW.

Although Canada might be reluctant to sign the TPNW as long as the United States is opposed to the treaty, supporters of the TPNW want Canada to set its own foreign policy in this regard. According to Erin, Canada needs to muster the political courage it had when it helped to spearhead the formal process to ban anti-personnel landmines, which resulted in a treaty now dubbed the Ottawa Treaty. Canada was initially reprimanded for its leadership but was eventually able to bring all its allies, with the exception of the United States, into the treaty.

Module 4: Canada and the pursuit of nuclear abolition

This module was facilitated by Cesar Jaramillo.

He pointed to Mexico, which supports the TPNW, as a relevant case study. Although Mexico has taken a different foreign policy stand from Canada and the United States in this matter, its relationships with its North American partners has survived. The fear of blowback can be overstated, in Cesar's opinion.

Canada contends that the current international security conditions are not ideal for the abolition of nuclear weapons. This justification sounds like a delay tactic to most proponents of disarmament. The international community has never waited for ideal conditions to promote changes in disarmament policy. Cesar also pointed out that the Permanent Five (P5) states of the UN Security Council are also the five States Parties to the NPT that possess nuclear weapons. He could not conceive of a conflict in which they would not be involved or affected, and so they would never experience the ideal security conditions they claim to need.

Although Canada is a non-nuclear-weapon state under the NPT, it is also a member of NATO and serves on its nuclear planning group. In assuming these two roles, it attempts to straddle the fence between retention and abolition of nuclear weapons.

Canada promotes a step-by-step process to nuclear abolition. This position seems to some to be a stalling tactic. One of the steps that the United States promotes is the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which it has signed but not ratified.

Cesar pointed out several forums in which Canada could take a leadership role in the fight for nuclear abolition. These venues included NATO, the nuclear energy industry, the G7 and G20, and the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Canada is a member in good standing in NATO. It is also a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), which oversees global nuclear supplies.

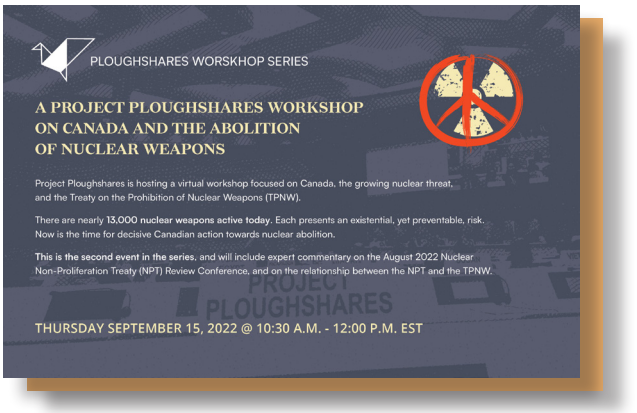
In 2018, the Canadian House of Commons Standing Committee on National Defence recommended that Canada take a leadership role in NATO to begin the work necessary to create the conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons. Since then, there has been little parliamentary activity on the nuclear file. To move ahead with nuclear abolition, nuclear disarmament must be made a Canadian priority like the Feminist International Assistance Policy. While there is no sign that Canada will attend the First Meeting of States Parties

(MSP) of the TPNW, there is precedent for Canada to get involved in the disarmament conversation, since it has attended similarly themed conferences, and was scheduled to attend the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons on June 20.

While it was initially assumed that no NATO member would attend the MSP, at the time of the workshop there were indications that Norway and Germany would attend as observers. It is the hope of civil society that their presence will encourage Canada to be more proactive on nuclear proliferation in the future. Cesar urged Canada to also take the opportunities provided by the NATO Strategic Concept in June 2022 and the NPT Review Conference set to take place in August 2022. (Canada did not attend the MSP, which was held soon after this workshop; NATO states Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway attended as observers).

A concluding poll of participants indicated that 43% thought that nuclear abolition was possible "in my lifetime," while 57% thought that abolition was possible, but that they would not live to see it. Participants thought that a world without nuclear weapons would allow greater investments in diplomacy, law, and multilateral disarmament processes.

WORKSHOP 2



Workshop 2, with two modules, was conducted on September 15.

Module 5: The First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

This module was introduced by Cesar Jaramillo and facilitated by Ray Acheson, director of disarmament at the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), and a member of the steering committee of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). Both Cesar and Ray attended the MSP.

Cesar laid out a context that explained why nuclear disarmament was such a pressing topic in 2022. The world was already experiencing a high risk of catastrophe, as evidenced by the setting of the Doomsday Clock at 100 seconds to midnight the month before the Russian invasion of Ukraine (see Module 1). Cesar believed that it was inevitable that the invasion would surely create more risk, which would be reflected in the clock's time for 2023 (as it did, moving to 90 seconds to midnight).

This summer was a busy time for the security and disarmament community; events included:

- The Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons Conference (HINW), June 20
- The TPNW's First Meeting of States Parties (TPNW 1MSP), June 21-23
- The NATO Madrid Summit, June 28-30
- The NPT Review Conference (NPT RevCon), August 1-26

Ray gave a first-person account of the first meeting of States Parties to the TPNW. Brazil, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dominican Republic, Ghana, Indonesia, Mozambique, Nepal, and Niger announced that they were in the process of ratifying the treaty. Ray was impressed with the diversity of States Parties participants, particularly those affected by nuclear testing and from the Global South. Such diversity was not seen among the activists and academics, most of whom were from the Global North. Clearly, more diverse participation from the Global South is needed.

Present at the TPNW gathering were observer states Belgium, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, and Switzerland. Four (Belgium, Germany, the Neth-

erlands, Norway) are members of NATO. While Sweden and the Netherlands were more hostile, Germany expressed interest in collaborating with TPNW states on matters of victim assistance and environmental remediation. Switzerland planned to hold a review of its position.

States Parties agreed on the dangers that nuclear weapons pose and their part in heightening international security tensions. The conference's final declaration referred to "the fallacy of nuclear deterrence," which relies on the threat of the actual use of nuclear weapons and, hence, the risks of the destruction of countless lives, of societies, of nations, and of inflicting global catastrophic consequences." These statements were seen as a strong condemnation of nuclear threats and particularly relevant to the Ukraine invasion. However, Ray noted, the acquisition of nuclear technology, such as the sharing of nuclear-powered submarines and the fissile material needed for that, are often neglected in these discussions.

The adopted action plan was seen as the start of a practical roadmap on how to implement the TPNW. It includes:

- Beginning work on the establishment of a trust fund to support people and communities harmed by the impacts of nuclear explosions. However, the action plan does not cover victim assistance and environmental remediation needed because of nuclear production such as uranium production. Adding this feature becomes more difficult with the promotion of nuclear power as a clean energy alternative in the battle against climate change
- Establishing a scientific advisory board with scientific, technical, and academic advisors nominated by member states
- Helping states implement the Treaty by supporting gender, ethnic, and racial diversity.
- A deadline to achieve nuclear abolition 10 years after nuclear-armed states join the TPNW
- Universalization of the TPNW by encouraging more states to support nuclear abolition.

Canada could have attended the TPNW 1MSP as an observer, but did not, declaring that, with no nuclear-armed members, the TPNW is ineffective. Canada has not suggested any paths forward, although its presence at the HINW conference affirms Canada's belief that the impact of nuclear explosions is catastrophic.

Canada seems to be saying that the law is not effective because not everybody follows it. If Canada wants to be a leader in nuclear disarmament, Ray suggests that it should not be accepting NATO's nuclear deterrence policy and must nstead speak out against nuclear weapons modernization, sharing, and investments.

In the United States, pension funds and financial institutions are selling off investments related to nuclear weapons. Dozens of municipal governments have also explicitly expressed their rejection of nuclear weapons. Even if Canada does not want to sign the TPNW, it can still promote disarmament by denouncing deterrence policies, pushing back against NA-

TO's nuclear policies, repudiating nuclear weapons modernization programs and financiers. Ray welcomed Canada's attendance at the HINW conference, but still wanted to see it sign on to the TPNW.

While NATO is seen as a hive mind, there are still cracks in the monolith that need to be exploited. For example, Spain takes a softer stand on certain issues; a former government of Iceland was sympathetic to nuclear abolition; some Canadian politicians did want to attend the 1MSP. And some NATO states did attend the 1MSP as observers. Ray predicted that, if one or two NATO members signed the TPNW, it would be easier to get other NATO states to join.

Module 6: The 2022 NPT RevCon

This module was facilitated by Cesar Jaramillo.

The 2020 NPT RevCon was delayed for two years by the COVID-19 pandemic but finally took place in August 2022 at UN Headquarters in New York, with Argentina serving as president. In Cesar's view, the meeting left much to be desired.

The 2015 NPT RevCon had failed to reach consensus on an outcome document. This failure was repeated in 2022. A lack of consensus on a number of major issues caused a progressive weakening in successive attempts to draft an outcome document that would be acceptable to all parties. Nuclear-armed states would not allow any of their "red lines" to be crossed; one result was vague language in the outcome text.

Non-nuclear-armed states were frustrated that so few of their concerns were addressed in the draft outcome document. These concerns included:

- Establishment of benchmarks, timelines, and targets: Non-nuclear-weapon states pushed for more specific and concrete commitments to the disarmament pillar. However, nuclear-weapon states called benchmarks and timelines "artificial" and "arbitrary," and reiterated that international security conditions were not ideal for disarmament.
- The role of non-nuclear-weapon states in nuclear alliances: An amendment stating that such states bore a responsibility to push for disarmament was ultimately rejected because it would have created a new category of states.
- Delay in establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East: Certain states in the region have long pursued a zone free from weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Little progress has been made and the effort requires the involvement of Israel, which is not a state party to the NPT. No mention was made of Israel in the final document, because of pressure by the United States.
- No-first-use: Nuclear-armed states refused to commit to no-first-use of their nuclear arsenals.
- Role of Russia in current war in Ukraine: Some NPT States Parties wanted to have Russia recognized as the aggressor. Because of such references in the final draft, Russia blocked consensus and there was no outcome document.
- Negative security assurances: Non-nuclear-armed states wanted a commitment

by the nuclear-armed states parties that they would not, under any circumstances, attack any non-nuclear-armed states with nuclear weapons. The United Kingdom would not support such a commitment and it was dropped.

- A moratorium on the production of fissile material: China was ready to block consensus if this item was included in the draft outcome document.

At this latest NPT RevCon, Canada remained aligned with NATO on the issue of nuclear disarmament, supporting NATO's strategic concept that holds that nuclear weapons are the ultimate security guarantee. This concept was viewed as even more critical since the Russian invasion of Ukraine. But Canada is being pushed at home to work within NATO to develop security doctrines that don't rely on nuclear weapons. Canada did show leadership at the 2022 NPT RevCon by including Cesar, a representative of civil society, in its official delegation.

Cesar emphasized that the Russian invasion of Ukraine had made the abolition of nuclear weapons more important than ever – not just to stop Russia from using nuclear weapons, but to prevent anyone from ever using nuclear weapons.

Opinion polls indicate that most Canadians believe that Canada can and should do more to secure nuclear abolition. There is a perception that NATO needs nuclear weapons to protect its members, and that nuclear-armed states will never join the TPNW. But the truth is that we just don't know. Canada can make a future without nuclear weapons by assuming a leadership role within NATO and the global disarmament community.

WORKSHOP 3

Workshop 3, with two modules (7 and 8), was conducted on November 23. Both modules were facilitated by Cesar Jaramillo and Julie Clark, a PhD candidate in Global Governance at the Balsillie School of International Affairs in Waterloo, Ontario. Julie served as an Electoral Observer during the 2019 elections in Ukraine.

Module 7: What the Russian invasion of Ukraine means for the future of nuclear disarmament efforts

Cesar began by explaining how the conflict in Ukraine has exacerbated the nuclear threat and brought it to the forefront of our collective consciousness. However, the threat is nothing new. So far, Russia has stopped short of threatening all-out nuclear war, but nobody should assume that Russia is bluffing when it invokes its nuclear arsenal.

Cesar pointed out other nuclear threats in the current volatile situation in Ukraine. Shelling in southern Ukraine close to the Zaporizhzhia power station, the largest nuclear power plant in Europe, creates the risk of a nuclear disaster six times that of Chernobyl. Other factors that could disable the power plant include rolling blackouts, operator error by plant engineers who must work under extreme stress, and the deployment of landmines near the power station.

So far the world has avoided a nuclear war. An oft-cited reason for this is the nuclear deterrence doctrine, which argues that nuclear-armed states refrain from deploying nuclear weapons because of the certainty of retaliation by nuclear-armed opponents. It is still the case, however, that for all nuclear-armed states, there are circumstances in which they would consider such a deployment. Some analysts claim that a belief in nuclear deterrence is holding Russia back from starting a nuclear war. Other experts have said that our escape, so far, from nuclear war is down to luck and having the right people making decisions at the right time. So, we really don't know what will happen in the coming days, weeks, and months.

Cesar contended that this level of uncertainty is unacceptable. The international community needs to prioritize multilateral institutions, rule of law, diplomacy, dialogue, and disarmament. It must focus on practical, realistic, pragmatic, and feasible solutions that would allow all parties (including allies of both countries) to avoid situations in which any of them

might feel compelled to use nuclear weapons. He saw many current initiatives, including the TPNW, as "too big picture" to meet the immediacy of the current threat.

If Cesar saw a silver lining in the crisis in Ukraine, it would be the renewed realization of the absurdity of nuclear deterrence. He outlined two broad scenarios that may or may not result from this crisis. Ideally, there would be recognition of the reality, fragility, and danger of these close calls, leading to measures to move the East-West relationship away from a divisive conflict. Conversely, nuclear-armed states could double down on nuclear posturing, increasing investments in the modernization of nuclear arsenals and a buildup of nuclear weaponry and facilities, deepening the East/West divide.

Julie focused on the current security situation that has grown out of the war in Ukraine and the attitudes of NATO and Russia. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg announced that member states needed to be prepared to support Ukraine for the long haul. U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin echoed this view at the Halifax International Security Forum, claiming that we are heading into a world of tyranny and turmoil.

This new security status quo makes practising diplomacy and seeking a peaceful solution to the conflict difficult. When the heightened public anxiety over nuclear war is factored in, the result could be inaction brought on by "public psychic numbing"; Robert Jay Lifton explains this state as one in which reality is so horrific that the mind protects itself through numbing or by ignoring the grave reality of the situation.

Yet, in this case, as in all times of crisis, there are ebbs and flows in threat level, and variations in where the international community currently exists on the escalation ladder. Even after we have moved up the ladder, we retain the ability to move down or even off the ladder.

It is the case, however, that modernizing nuclear arsenals makes getting off the escalation ladder harder. For example, the U.S. Department of Defense has pledged 600 billion dollars to modernize nuclear stockpiles and delivery systems. This move is accompanied by a global trend to lower levels of transparency and a stronger hold on the status quo.

Those in the nuclear disarmament movement must remain optimistic. Individuals must use all available tools and platforms to reach as many people as possible; methods include writing letters to the editor, using social media, and contacting elected officials. Collectively, the nuclear disarmament movement should update their messaging and the technology used to deliver it, taking cues from other mass movements like Black Lives Matter, Idle No More, and those focused on the climate crisis. Most importantly, people must persist in talking about abolishing nuclear weapons. Nuclear tensions predate the invasion of Ukraine and will persist after the resolution of the conflict.

Module 8: Canada's role in facilitating nuclear abolition

Cesar urged Canada to do more to achieve the abolition of nuclear weapons. Canada is an active player in the nuclear industry, and is a member of NATO, the G7, and the G20. Canada also has had a historic role in the humanitarian disarmament community, as evidenced by the Mine Ban Treaty. Canada should situate itself as a bridge builder between these communities.

We tend to see the world as divided between nuclear-armed states and non-nuclear-armed states, but the reality is more nuanced. A third camp consists of nuclear-dependent states.

Canada is a nuclear-dependent state. While Canada presents as a non-nuclear-weapon state under the NPT and a state that rejects nuclear weapons, it is also a member of NATO, an overtly nuclear alliance.

Both Cesar and Julie urged Canada to attend the Second Meeting of State Parties to the TPNW as an observer, following the lead of several NATO members that attended the first one. Cesar also urged Canada to prioritize diplomacy in the resolution of the war in Ukraine, with the specific goal of de-escalating the possible use of nuclear weapons.

Julie wanted Canada's history of disarmament made more available. She talked about Canada's returning U.S. nuclear weapons on Canadian soil to the Americans. Canada was the first nuclear-capable country to decide not to develop nuclear weapons. It made these steps without risking its membership within NATO or its relationship with the United States.

Julie also outlined Canada's connections with nuclear weapons. Canada hosted nuclear research facilities engaged in the work of the Manhattan Project and provided raw materials, including uranium, that were critical in the production of nuclear weapons. She noted that uranium mines pose disproportionately high levels of environmental risk and radiation exposure to indigenous communities. Canadian military veterans were also exposed to radiation. Working on the TPNW's Article 6: Victim Assistance and Environmental Remediation would be a good fit for Canada and also relevant to Canada's feminist foreign policy.

Julie also encouraged the Canadian Parliament to host a full debate on Canada's role in relation to the TPNW and how to combat rising nuclear tensions because of the return of great power politics.

The war in Ukraine and the resulting heightened risk of nuclear war could be the wake-up call that the international community has needed to move toward disarmament and the abolition of nuclear weapons. But to make the move, alternative security arrangements that account for disparities in conventional military capabilities, methods of conflict resolution, and ways to strengthen multilateral ties must be in place. The Marshall Islands, the site of multiple nuclear tests, has been crucial in reminding people of the effects of nuclear weapons.

Both Cesar and Julie indicated that the TPNW has overwhelming support from the Canadian public; now we need the political will to engage. We are at a juncture that requires strong political leadership to create a future without nuclear weapons. But we can proceed without having everything worked out in advance. What is important is to act with hope and to move forward in good faith.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CD	Conference on Disarmament
CTBT	Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty
ICAN	International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
IHL	International humanitarian law
JCPOA	Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (Iran nuclear deal)
MSP	Meeting of States Parties
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPT	Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group
P5	Permanent Five (of United Nations Security Council)
RevCon	Review Conference
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SNOWCAT	Support of Nuclear Operations with Conventional Air Tactics
TPNW	Treaty on the Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
UK	United Kingdom
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
U.S.	United States
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WMD	Weapons of mass destruction

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